(e) The Marine Products Export Development Authority has been assisting the fishing vessel owners by providing subsidy for installation of fish finders, Global Positioning System (GPS), fish hold, etc. in mechanised fishing vessels; training of fishermen on the use of fish finders, GPS, etc.; installation of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) on board fishing vessels; supply of insulated fish boxes to fishermen; etc.

Subsidies for export of grains

162.SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to State:

(a) the facilities and subsidies provided to private traders to export grains;

(b) whether traders are demanding more subsidies; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) As per the extant EXIM Policy, export of wheat and rice is free. Some of the provisions to boost the export of foodgrains (wheat and rice) include publicity compaigns, sending delegations abroad, participating in International Trade fairs, inviting potential buyers and providing financial asistance to exporters for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of products, conducting market surveys and reimbursing certain WTO admissible costs on account of marketing and transport.

(b) and (c) Pursuant to the stoppage of release of wheat and non-basmati rice from FCI at concessional rates since 11th August, 2003, exporters have been demanding continuation of the facility. A New foodgrain export policy is currently at an advanced stage of consideration in Government.

Support price for tobacco

163. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh have sought support price in view of low prices of tobacco in the market; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No, Sir. the price of

Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco in the ongoing auctions in Andhra Pradesh is ruling above the Minimum Support Price for the commodity.

(b) Does not arise.

Agreement in WTO

164. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a bid to reach an agreement on a negotiating framework for key issues like agriculture and non-agriculture, the World Trade Organisation General Council Chairman has urged members to work towards arriving at a shared understanding of the package as early as possible;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any efforts with other countries to solve agriculture norms/non-agriculture issues in the WTO; and

(c) if so, to what extent it has succeeded and by when a final decision is likely to be taken by WTO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India has been coordinating regularly with the other Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) having similar interests and concerns on various issues in the on-going negotiations under the Doha Work Programme, including in agriculture. Thus India is part of developing country groupings like the G-20 (Agriculture) and G-16 (Singapore Issues). In respect of all these issues, including agriculture and non-agricultural products' market access, discussions are taking place in the various negotiating bodies constituted in WTO in order to come to an understanding on the 'framework' of negotiations. These efforts are aimed at achieving a balanced outcome, including special and differential treatment for developing countries to enable them to meet their developmental and trade concerns. The negotiations are formally scheduled to conclude by 1 January, 2005 in accordance with the mandate given by the WTO Ministers at Doha in November 2001. At this stage, since the negotiations are on-going, it is difficult to estimate the success or otherwise of India's efforts in these negotiations.

Revival of tea sector in West Bengal

165. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSRY be pleased to state: